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ABSTRACT

Student involvement in a continuous, integrated, and sequential program of awareness, exposure, and skill development can have an immediate impact upon values clarification and knowledge acquisition, and a long-range effect upon social change and environmental stewardship. Designed to suit the learning styles of students, the activities are classroom and field based within the context of the community. Beginning in the nearby community, students gain insight into the need to create, maintain, and protect areas. As inquiry encompasses the world beyond the local community, the studies become more abstract and the experiences vicarious in nature. Grade 5 activities focus on cooperation, grade 6 on social organization, and grades 7-8 on cultures. The outline of the stages of cultural consciousness suggests a design of a culture awareness program for kindergarten through grade 12. Issues of citizenship in the global community comprise include two articles on citizenship. The incorporation of community resources into the curriculum provides a reality based approach to learning. Ideas for community based learning provide strategies to implement a program and methods to utilize and organize resources. (Author/CK)

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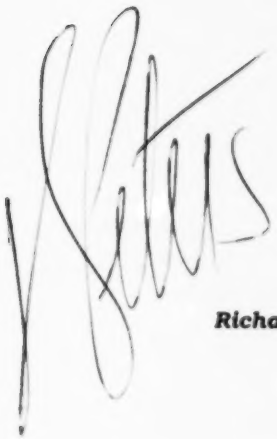
Participatory Citizenship

a learned way of living



Richard Peters

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LEARNING TO PROTECT THE COMMONS: MAINTAINING LIFESPACE QUALITY

At every level of human existance there can be found an area of nature that belongs to Earth and all of its inhabitants.

These 'commons' can be found within the context of the local community, the surrounding region, the county/state, the nation, the continent, and the global environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Student involvement in a continuous (K-12), integrated (multi-disciplinary), and sequential (developmental) program of awarnesss/exposure/skills development can have an immediate impact upon values clarification and knowledge acquisition, and a long-range effect upon social change and environmental stewardship policies.

In the local community, students can be taken into the community lifespace environment to observe natrual and human-made phenomena. They can study the origins and characteristics of phenomena, and determine the degree of interaction and interdependence that exist among these diverse lifespace properties.

The 'commons' found in one community might differ greatly from those found elsewhere. For example, in town "A" there exists a pasture that serves a multi-faceted purpose; from providing a grazing area for livestock to recreation facilities for townspeople. In town "X", a wooded area has been reserved for bird watching, nature walks, and overnight camping. Native flora and fauna are protected, and a trail system has been developed.

Beginning close-to-home, in the nearby community, students gain insights into the need to create, maintain, and protect areas that serve Earth's creatures and that enhance the quality of the total lifespace environment -- natural and social (human made). It is within the local community that students can gain direct/concrete exposure to and interaction with phenomena via field trips, nature walks, hiking/camping trips, and field-based investigations related to classroom-based instruction.

As inquiry encompasses the world beyond the local community, studies become more abstract and experiences are vicarious in nature. Limited field trips and field-based investigations are supplemented with audiovisual presentations, guest speakers, and independent reading. When considering studies beyond the boundries of the nation (possibly even the state) vicarious experiences completely replace those close-to-home activities and experiences of a direct/concrete nature.

Within a region or a county/state, 'commons' include bodies of water, wooded areas, praries, and marshes. Internationally, these areas include Earth's oceans and seas, deserts, mountain ranges, polar regions, and even the atmosphere!

Attention must be paid to studies in the several natural/physical/social sciences that relate to Earth and human interaction and interdependence. For example, Earth's carrying capacity and an ever-increasing human population. In what ways do humans impact upon Earth's finite and renewable resources? Upon the soil's capacity to return increased crop yields? Upon an ever-decreasing global forest to produce ample quanities of oxygen -- while, at the same time, processing increased amounts of carbon dioxide and air pollutants? Upon living space suitable for human habitation?

In order to design instructional programs and learning experiences that affect students' awareness, attitudes/values, and citizenship behavior (proactive action for social change) teachers from the several disciplines must come together, talk, and plan around common themes or topics. The result of such a cooperative effort is that teachers and students think holistically about natural/social environments and related phenomena.

The several activities and experiences are designed to suit the learning styles of students, and are classroom and field-based within the context of the community. Students role-play researching natural/social scientists as they identify conflicts, issues, problems, and situations that have positive and negative effects upon environments/phenomena. Direct contact with phenomena enable students to gain hands-on experience, and provides opportunities for them to build perceptual bridges between that which takes place in the classroom and in the real world that exists around the school.

NATURE SENSITIVITY

As a result on direct contact with real life conflicts, issues, problems, and situations -- within the context of the total lifespace environment, students begin to understand the character of natural phenomena as well as the plight of natural settings.

Working as researching natural/social scientists, individual students and inquiry teams interact with the lifespace environment and community resource people as they discover the interlocking dependency between natural/social environments and related phenomena.

They begin to understand the need to protect the TOTAL lifespace environment --if they want to protect any part of it! They realize that while any given area may service the needs of society, the natural setting must be preserved so that service to society can continue and the 'health' of the area can be

maintained -- for the benefit of the area as well as the human society. For example, a forest region gives up its timber growth to humans -- so that homes and other structures can be built, so that paper products can be manufactured (etc), and so that the economy of the region can prosper and individuals can find gainful employment. At the same time, humans must realize that timber harvesting must be managed and that reforestation is required -- if there is to be a future crop and if the natural order of the area is to be maintained. Without the forest, the flora and fauna of the area will disappear and the quality of the natural setting will suffer. Without the forest, building and manufacturing will cease, the economy of the area will suffer, and people will be put out of work. In such an interlocking dependency situation -- nature and humans will suffer irreparable harm if the quality/state of the natural environment is not protected against exploitation and misuse. MAN the destroyer must be MAN the protector. Stewardship must become the human ethic when dealing with natural phenomena.

EARTHSYSTEM: the constant interaction between natural and social environments and their component phenomena: namely, flora, fauna, humans, cycles and processes.

EARTHSYSTEM INQUIRY - K-12 study of natural/social environments and their interdependence on a global scale.

What are the scientific origins of Earth?

What is the history of the development/growth of diverse cultures?

In what ways have human groups adapted to their immediate natural surroundings?

In what ways have human groups altered the EARTHSYSTEM?

In what ways have human groups cared for/protected EARTHSYSTEM?

In what ways have human groups had a negative impact upon EARTHSYSTEM?

EARTHSYSTEM INQUIRY - an investigation of concepts/knowledge/skills related to anthropology, biology, economics, geography, geology, history, political science, and sociology.

INTERLOCKING DEPENDENCY

The inability of human groups to survive/maintain quality lifespace environments without consideration being given to the welfare of natural phenomena and related settings.

What are the characteristics of a NATURE SENSITIVE person ?

An individual who 1) is aware of the natural world around him/her -- including the physical geography of earth's surface, 2) is informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to natural environments, 3) has empathy for the plight of nature -- locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, 4) understands the character of diverse natural environments that are nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed, 5) has developed attitudes and opinions about ecology-related issues in contemporary life, 6) perceives relationships between humans and nature, and 7) is committed to proactive action.

What are the characteristics of a CULTURE LITERATE person ?

An individual who 1) is aware of the human-made (social) world around him/her -- including the cultural and political geography of earth's surface, 2) is informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to social environments, 3) has empathy for the plight of diverse human groups, 4) understands the character of social environments that are nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed, 5) has developed attitudes and opinions about culture-related issues in contemporary life, 6) perceives relationships between human groups, 7) recognizes the differences/similarities among the traits

GRADE 5

CONCEPT/THEME — C O O P E R A T I O N

TOPICS

Ways people can help one another.

Ways people learn from one another.

Ways people share knowledge, labor, resources, and technology.

ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

Guest speakers into classrooms/at field-based sites.

Tours of field-based places/sites.

Audiovisual presentations.

Classroom lectures/field-based discussions.

Primary/secondary source data collection.

APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

Development/presentation of multimedia reports.

Individual/small group inquiry and research.

Documenting evidence of cooperation in the community using graphic media devices (e.g., motion picture cameras, still photography cameras, and video tape equipment).

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Cooperation-oriented community service projects.

Volunteer work with community service agencies and organizations.

Establishing a cooperation-oriented program in school.

Volunteer work with students in other grades (e.g., tuitoring, reading aloud, presenting plays, showing audiovisual presentations).

REFINEMENT
ACTIVITIES

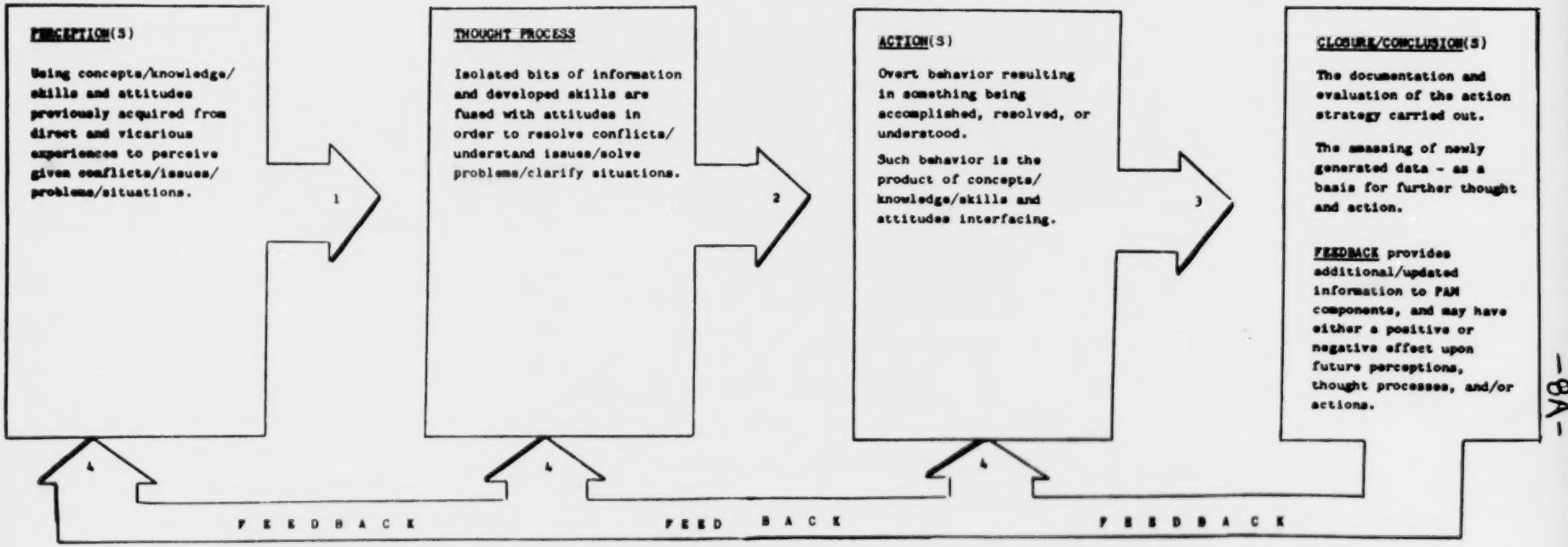
Meet with the building principal/assistant principal(s) and design a COOPERATION campaign for the school.

Design a Parent/School cooperation program.

Cooperate with middle school students and/or high school students to design/implement a variety of projects/programs that are both school-based and community-centered.

PAM

Students use the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL (PAM) to enhance intellectual skills development; specifically, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making regarding contemporary conflicts, issues, problems, and situations confronting natural/social (human-made) environments and related phenomena/processes.


PERCEPTION(S)
Using concepts/knowledge/ skills and attitudes previously acquired from direct and vicarious experiences to perceive given conflicts/issues/ problems/situations.
1
THOUGHT PROCESS
Isolated bits of information and developed skills are fused with attitudes in order to resolve conflicts/ understand issues/solve problems/clarify situations.
2
ACTION(S)
Overt behavior resulting in something being accomplished, resolved, or understood.
Such behavior is the product of concepts/ knowledge/skills and attitudes interfacing.
3
CLOSURE/CONCLUSION(S)
The documentation and evaluation of the action strategy carried out.
The amassing of newly generated data - as a basis for further thought and action.
FEEDBACK provides additional/updated information to PAM components, and may have either a positive or negative effect upon future perceptions, thought processes, and/or actions.
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GRADE 6

CONCEPT/THEME — SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

TOPICS

Basic economic wants of all people.

Ways basic economic wants of family members are met.

Common responsibilities of family members in any/all culture(s).

ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

Audiovisual presentations.

Guest speakers in classrooms/at field-based sites.

Inclass discussion of daily family life and the roles played by various family members.

Independent reading re: family life/structure/roles in diverse cultures.

Guest speakers who have lived in/are from foreign countries discuss family life and social roles.

APPLICATION
ACTIVITIES

Primary/secondary source data collection.

Development/presentation of multimedia reports.

Writing to pen pals in different countries to learn more about family life and social roles.

Identifying the basic wants of individuals and making a bulletin board display.

REINFORCEMENT
ACTIVITIES

Visits to homes of other students to experience family life.

Panel discussions of how governments meet the basic economic wants of individuals.

Panel discussion of the importance of FAMILY to social organization and everyday functioning.

Meetings with psychologists, social workers, clergy, working parents, and day care specialists to discuss family structure/functions/roles of individual members in diverse cultures.

REFINEMENT
ACTIVITIES

Students role play different family members re: sex role stereotyping, age, experience, education, earning capability, decision maker.

Students compare the culture traits of family life in different societies. Visual displays/ reports are developed.

Students hone observation skills at family outings and in clinical/discussion group situations.

PAM

Students use the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL (PAM) to enhance intellectual skills development; specifically, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making regarding contemporary conflicts, issues, problems, and situations confronting natural/social (human-made) environments and related phenomena/processes.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT TRAITS (EXAMPLES)

family (functions/roles/structure)

religion (ceremonies/rituals/personalities/sites objects/holidays)

philosophy (view of others/the world/life)

technology (tools/weapons/machines/production)

division-of-labor (training/specialization)

government (power/structure/functions/personalities and offices/titles/rules of governance)

shelter (types/styles/materials)

food/diet

dress/costumes

social roles/status

art/literature/music/dance

economic system (currency/barter/goods and services)

education system (function/structure/opportunities curricula/methods/materials/goals and objectives/length of day-year)

military (function/structure-organization/power)

geographical location (latitude/longitude)

relationships with other human groups (diplomatic/economic/military/cultural/social)

GRADES 7-8

CONCEPT/THEME C U L T U R E S

TOPICS

What are some of the differences among diverse social groups of humans?

What are some of the similarities among diverse social groups of humans?

What are/have been some of the effects of diverse natural environments upon the social development of human groups?

ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

Audiovisual presentations.

Guest speakers in classrooms/at field-based sites.

Inclass discussion(s) of human groups; cultures and related traits through the ages.

Independent reading re: selected past/present cultures, civilizations, and human (social) groups.

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APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

Use of the SAGE (Student Awareness of Global Environments) cross-culture matrix to display and compare the traits of diverse social groups.

Culture study reports.

Display of culture artifacts/phenomena (e.g., utensils, tools, weapons, jewelry, toys, pottery).

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Interviews with people from diverse cultures re: daily lifestyles, values, and perceptions of the world.

Visual displays depicting culture traits.

REFINEMENT ACTIVITIES

Comparative studies of selected cultures/ social groups.

Write stories about life in real/fictitious cultures -- depicting lifestyles and values.

PAM

Students use the PROACTIVE ACTION MODEL (PAM) to enhance intellectual skills development; specifically, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making regarding contemporary conflicts, issues, problems, and situations confronting natural/social (human-made) environments and related phenomena/processes.

STAGES OF CULTURAL CONSCIOUNESS

Normative Nature of Culture -- an appreciation of one's own culture, and an awareness of the reality that there are other ways of doing things.

THEN

Critical Awareness ---------- to investigate one's culture.

THEN

Things Can Be Different ------ the status quo does NOT have to be maintained!

NOTES: using this outline to design a K-12 culture awareness program... the early elementary years could be spent on topic #1 normative nature of culture. At grade(s) 4/5, an emphasis can be placed on critical awareness of conflicts/issues/problems/ situations related to natural/social settings and phenomena. Beginning at grade(s) 8/9/10 students investigate the ways by which "things can be different".

"Culture-bound" ---------- to define situations from the perspective of the norms of one's culture - assuming that OUR ways of interaction are universal.

"Pattern Detecting" ---------- identifying universal practices and processes of cultures: the strand that makes diverse cultures common and alike.

NOTES

Awareness of culture: Through the several grades, students are systematically introduced/exposed to phenomena that represent diverse culture traits. Field trips, guest speakers, audiovisual presentations, artifacts kits, independent research, interviewing, working with ethnic groups in the community, ...

Analysis of one's culture and a deepening awareness and understanding of other cultures: Through the identification and analysis of contemporary conflicts, issues, problems, and situations facing one's culture/society -- and other cultures as well, students begin to develop a sense of reality when it comes to how effective the culture/society is at addressing these conflicts, issues, problems, and situations and in designing strategies to resolve them, clarify them and inform the populace, to solve problems, and to better understand situations. An investigation of diverse cultures; studying the history of each human group and learning about institutions, beliefs, values, and culture traits.

Students need repeated opport unities to interact with cultural phenomena (places, things, and events) as well as people - in native settings -- whether nearby/close-to-home or distant/far-removed.

CITIZENSHIP AND 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITIES

As individuals, and as members of social groups, we function simultaneously within the context of several related, diverse real life worlds. Some of these 'worlds' are nearby/close-to-home and are readily perceived and understood to be important in our daily lives because of our continuous interaction with them. Other 'worlds' are distant/far-removed from where we are, and because we do not interact with them directly and continuously, we do not perceive their existence and/or impact upon our lives!

Efforts must be made, within the context of social studies curricula, to help children and youth perceive and interact with distant phenomena (real or simulated interaction) so that they begin to understand the complexity and importance of the total global lifespace environment upon them -- singularly and collectively.

LEVELS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Each of us is a citizen of family, neighborhood, community, regional, state, national, and an international collection of diverse social/culture groups.

In order to successfully assume the mantle of citizenship responsibility at each level, individuals must demonstrate an understanding of:

1) contemporary conflicts, issues, problems and/or situations that have a direct impact upon our daily lives - fortunes - futures.

2) personalities and groups/organizations that impact our lives and effect our well-being.

3) cultural, economic, political, and social conditions that influence the quality of life.

4) historical events, movements, and courses-of-action that impact contemporary life.

5) diverse points-of-view, opinions, and/or position statements regarding conflicts, issues, problems, and/or situations.

Individuals should be proficient in the ability to:

1) discern relevant conflicts, issues, problems, and/or situations that impact daily life.

2) identify and locate sources of pertinent information -- to enhance one's perceptions concerning relevant conditions as stated in (1).

3) collect and analyze data.

4) evaluate the many facets of conflicts, issues, problems, and/or situations.

5) form an opinion and take a public stand.

6) identify alternative courses-of-action that could be taken in order to resolve conflicts, clarify issues, solve problems, and/or better understand situations.

7) ponder and evaluate the possible consequences of each alternative course-of-action.

8) select the most-appropriate course-of-action and design an implementation strategy.

9) act overtly in a proactive manner.

10) muster support among the diverse community-based POPULATIONS and SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS.

According to Clark, Newmann, and Rutter, civic participation depends, in part, on the development of a sense of public good. Citizens should be able to build consensus and compromise through involvement in public discourse, and the ability to see public issues from alternative perspectives.

Community service programs which further the aims of social studies would involve not only participation, but also would provide mechanisms through which students would reflect upon related public issues and develop the capacity of perspective

taking.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) promotes the notion that public service programs could include:

1) the service (provided by students) provides opportunities for them to nurture a sense of commitment and caring for others.

2) the service would directly involve students with a critical social problem or in some way contribute to the common good.

3) involves students in decision-making, problem-solving, political participation and/or consensus building.

4) provides opportunities for reflection and thoughtful analysis -- such reflective seminars should focus on social issues, social responsibility, questions of the common good. Students would be given opportunities to articulate values and reason about value conflicts.

5) involve adults and students working together.

Focusing on Participatory Citizenship

The goals of AMERICA 2000 guide parents, business leaders, and communities-at-large in creating educational programs that will help today's students.

by Richard Peters

All across this nation, local communities and state governments are designing plans to enhance the readiness of children and youth for 21st century living.

Using AMERICA 2000 goals as a guide, concerned parents, business leaders, elected officials, and communities-at-large are creating educational programs that will help today's students function as productive citizens in tomorrow's world.

AMERICA 2000's Goal III focuses on the need for students to use their minds well, so they are prepared for responsible citizenship. According to the National Education Goals Panel (1992), community service is an area of individual preparation often times not planned for in the typical curriculum.

While Austin's PROJECT A+ program emphasizes young adults being able to demonstrate social responsibility and active involvement in community service, most secondary curricula do not set such lofty goals. Too often, it is believed that good citizens happen as a result of a study of national/state history and national/state government. Knowing how a bill becomes law and how the President of the United States is elected does *not* guarantee that students will become productive members of the society and proactive citizens. Something more is needed!

Participatory Citizenship

What is needed in the school curriculum, are ample opportunities for all students to acquire and apply citizenship skills both in the classroom and within the community.

Students need involvement with citizenship skills development in all subjects – not just in social studies classes! Thus, there is a need for teacher teams to design activities and experiences that will insure that students practice good citizenship everyday – all the time. Good citizenship should be perceived, by students, as something that permeates their lives – and not something to be discussed in history or government classes. Citizenship should be defined as actions and not as the discussion of abstract theories!

Students need exposure to conflicts, issues, problems, and situations that have both immediate and long-range impact upon the lives of individuals and groups.

Students cannot remain passive onlookers in the game of everyday living. They must be trained in active involvement with processes that require commitment and individual responsibility to the betterment of the state of human affairs. They must be able and willing to right wrongs, to make critical decisions and sacrifices and contribute to the solution of perplexing social problems.

Citizenship is not a course, but a learned way of living.

A Plan of Action

Beginning in the lower elementary grades, children need to participate in activities that focus their attention and development skills on social issues that directly affect them. They need exposure to the community-at-large and to everyday living.

By the middle school years, children and youth have become acquainted with real life situations that require action on the part of concerned citizens. They participate in community-oriented activities that require them to work cooperatively with others.

In high school, youths are involved in activities that build upon earlier experiences, and that require them to apply acquired knowledge and skills to perceived situations. For example:

- participate in community/school clean-up campaigns;
- get out the vote by baby-sitting, going door-to-door reminding individuals to vote, and driving voters to the polls;
- volunteer energy and time to peer tutoring in school, and helping adults learn to read at community centers;
- serve as BIG BROTHERS/ BIG SISTERS;
- man a crisis hotline telephone;
- write a column in the local newspaper;
- work in a hospital;
- communicate with local/area/state/national elected officials on matters of concern and interest;
- participate in walk-a-thons and bike-a-thons;
- be an advocate for some social action; and
- organize community awareness programs.

The products of PARTICIPATORY CITIZENSHIP programs are proactive individuals who act for the betterment of the group. They accept responsibility for personal behavior, and conduct themselves within the framework of the law.

Citizenship is not a course! It is not an academic exercise but rather a learned way-of-living! Citizenship skills can only be acquired and honed by actually participating in activities, both in the school and community, that require commitment, reasoned thought, and action.

Richard Peters is professor of Education, Corpus Christi State University.

Citizenship ...

Working with community resource people, teachers can design a curriculum that provides for both subject matter-related activities and extra-curricular projects. Site-based management teams should engage the concerns and expertise of individuals and groups that function within the community. Community resource sites can become citizenship skills training 'classrooms' – as students participate in activities related to real life challenges. Such activities can enhance critical thinking, decision-making, and problem solving skills among high school students.

ECOnauts

An example of citizenship training might involve students in activities designed to enhance the quality of the environment of the local community.

As defined by this author, ECOnauts are explorers of the world(s) around them. They are researching scientists who interact with natural and social phenomena.

These nature-sensitive individuals are aware of the natural world around them; are informed about past and present conflicts, issues, problems, and situations related to natural environments; have empathy for the plight of nature – locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally; understand the characters of diverse natural environments that are nearby/close-to-home and distant/far-removed; have developed attitudes and opinions about ecology-related issues in contemporary life; perceive relationships between humans and nature; and are committed to pro-active action.

In classrooms, students would be involved in teacher team-planned activities that focus attention on conflicts, issues, problems, and situations that require citizen action.

As extra-curricular activities, ECOnaut club members would be involved in community service projects. Working with community resource people, club advisors design projects that enable students to demonstrate the ability to reason, to apply knowledge, and to solve problems.

Being a good citizen is a lifelong process involving skills development and application everyday of our lives! Citizenship is not part of the curriculum – it is the essence of the curriculum!

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

By incorporating community resources into the instructional process, the walls of the traditional classroom are expanded to encompass the character and nature of the local/area lifespace environment, and thus provide a reality-based approach to learning.

Because children and youth come from real world environments, there is a need to relate classroom instruction to everyday life. There is also a need to enhance student's comprehension of the importance (and immediate application) of classroom instruction to the real world -- for today and for all of their tomorrows.

Schools cannot replicate within their walls the total real world environment of the community! People, places, things, events, and locations/sites can be made an integral part of teaching and learning. At times, resources can be brought into the classroom, and on other occasions students must be taken to field-based places/sites such as nature areas, museums, plays and other types of live performances, workplaces, historic locations, and community service facilities.

STRATEGIES

Whenever community resources are incorporated into the instructional process, there are several questions that must be asked and answered by the classroom teacher. For example:

> When is the best time to use community resources -- in order to maximize their impact upon student's learning? At the beginning, during, or at the end of unit instruction?
>
> Is there anything that can be done/used to accomplish instructional goals and objectives other than the use of community resources?

When are field trips and other types of excursions into the community environment absolutely necessary -- in order to enhance student's comprehension about the real world?

Resources can be used 1) to introduce a unit of study -- to focus student's attention on planned activities and related experiences, 2) to develop the concepts/knowledge or content/skills related to the unit theme or topic during the formative stage, or 3) as an end-of-unit culminating activity -- an opportunity for students to apply acquired concepts/knowledge or content/skills to resource-related activities.

Introductory Phase of Unit Development. Guest speakers in the classroom, pictures of local sites, or field trips may best focus student's attention on the various tasks-at-hand. The incorporation of resources into the instructional process lends a sense of reality to planned activities, and students develop an awareness of the relevance of learning to the real world(s) that they know. As a result of introductory phase interaction with resources, when students become directly involved in later unit development activities (during the formative phase), they will be better able to make 'connections' between having directly experienced phenomena and now learning more about these things in a more-abstract manner.

Formative Phase of Unit Development. As students become engrossed in unit studies, there may be appropriate times to directly expose them to selected resources that will 1) enhance their comprehension, 2) introduce them to new and previously unknown data or phenomena, 3) build upon and enrich acquired concepts/knowledge/skills, 4) expose them to new aspects of the total lifespace environment that is the local/area community, and 5) bring students into direct contact

with people, places, and things that have had/do now have great influence upon their singular and collective lives.

Culminating Phase of Unit Development. It may be best to thoroughly study a theme or topic before introducing students to related phenomena. Using resources in this phase of unit development enables students to bring acquired knowledge and skills to planned activities. For example, after spending three weeks studying seashore environments, Mr. Jones' sixth grade class is taken on a daytrip to the coast. Once there, students observe marine life, collect shells and plant life samples -- for later study back in the classroom, search for types of marine debris that can endanger birds and sea life (e.g., plastic six-pack rings, fishing line, and netting), and use still photography cameras and video tape equipment to document the experience.

At whatever phase of unit development community resources are incorporated into the process -- the rule of thumb should be: WAYS BY WHICH COMMUNITY RESOURCES CAN ENHANCE STUDENT'S LEARNING AND COMPREHENSION OF REAL WORLD ENVIRONMENTS.

RESOURCES UTILIZATION

The use of resources in the instructional process must serve some legitimate, justifiable purpose. Whenever it is important to bring resources into the classroom or to take students into the community environment, it must be clearly understood by the teacher, the students, immediate supervisors, parents, resource people, and fellow teachers that no other experience or type of exposure to phenomena (real or simulated) can be substituted in their place.

Resources can be incorporated into teaching/learning strategies for purposes of achieving stated goals/objectives, and to affect

student's learning and comprehension in a variety of ways. For example:

1) The tour of locations/sites and places for purposes of initial exposure and awareness. For example, taking students to a museum, art gallery, library (etc.) so that they might better understand what the facility is like, the community service that the resource provides to interested citizens, and what kinds of objects/things can be found at these places.
2) The tour of locations/sites and places for purposes of direct, hands-on experiences. For example, students are taken to a wooded area and allowed to collect flora/fauna samples for later study and related discussion in the classroom. While at the resource site, a naturalist or forest service personnel explain the character and nature of the environment to students.
3) Visits to resource workplaces to observe people applying learned skills to daily tasks, to learn more about processes-skills-technology, to gain a sense of diverse community resource sites, to understand how individuals and groups function within real world situations, and to better understand the complexity/diversity of the world of work as well as understanding the importance of getting a good education if one wants to be able to successfully compete for the careers and occupations of personal choice.

4) Nature walks, daytrip hikes, canoe trips, or overnight camping trips into natural surroundings for purposes of environmental awareness and understanding.

5) Daytrip hikes and overnight camping trips into natural surroundings for purposes of skills development and application in real world settings.

6) Community service projects that enable proactive students to interact with citizens in order to identify and resolve real world conflicts, to clarify issues, to solve problems, and to better understand situations.

ORGANIZING FOR RESOURCES UTILIZATION

Once approval for community-centered activities has been granted by the building principal or other immediate supervisor, the classroom teacher must:

1) Contact the resource and inform the contact person re: the day/time of the planned visit, the number of students and chaperones, and the instructional purpose for either the classroom visit (by a guest speaker) or field-based visit.

2) In the classroom, prior to the guest speaker or excursion, introduce students to the resource that they will be exposed to. Make certain that students know why it is important for them to interact with particular resources, and what they should expect to gain from the experience(s). If appropriate (depending upon the nature of the resource), discuss the character/physical features

of the place/site to be visited.

3) Request parental approval to take students on a daytrip or other type of excursion away from the safe confines of the school. Explain, in terms of learning enhancement, why it is important for their sons and daughters to be involved in the planned activity. Also let them know know plans to insure children's safety.

4) Prior to taking students into the community, design activities that will, in fact, enhance their learning and comprehension. They may, for example, be told to look for particular things en route to/at resource sites; to take notes or to record data on film/video tape; to collect samples; or to ask pertinent questions. Also plan for adequate student supervision using classroom aides, parent volunteers, and/or other teachers.

5) Upon arrival at community resources, and prior to leaving the bus or van, divide the large group into small inquiry teams. Each team will be accompanied by a chaperone. By dividing the large group into several teams, every student is assured that he/she will see/hear what is happening. Also, small groups are easier to manage in cramped quarters.

6) Upon completion of the activity, call the roll and account for everyone -- chaperones and students alike!

7) Back in the classroom, students should be involved in activities that build upon and incorporate resource experiences into later learning. Time should be set aside to discuss the experience(s) and to determine what students liked best about the experience(s). A letter of thanks, to the resource person/site, signed by all students would be appropriate. It should be noted that some community-centered activities and resources lend themselves to follow-up visits by resource people -- to the classroom.

COMMENTS

In decades past, John Dewey proposed that school studies be derived from materials which exist within the scope of ordinary life-experiences of children and youth.[1]

The classroom, in particular, and the school, in general, exist not in isolation from the real world of students -- but rather at the center of that world! Students expect that formal education experiences and content will not only relate to the real world, but that experiences gained from Kindergarten through Grade Twelve will prepare them to successfully function within that world.

The incorporation of community resources into the curriculum provides opportunities to introduce students to phenomena that they might otherwise never experience.

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1 Dewey, J. Experience and Education, p. 73.

Resources can:

1) enhance knowledge and skills development;
2) make that which has been learned relevant to the daily lives of students;
3) provide opportunities for skills application in real world settings;
4) make learning come alive, interesting, and relevant as a result of direct exposure;
5) provide opportunities for direct interaction with phenomena;
6) help students make the 'connections' between that which happens in the classroom and the real world(s) in which they live.

There are times when students are unable to gain direct access to resources because of hazardous conditions, proximity to where students are located, prohibitive costs, and liability considerations. In these instances, if it is considered to be important to have a working knowledge about selected resources, audiovisual materials can be used to vicariously expose students to people, places, and things. Films, filmstrips, photographs, slides, and video tapes can be 'shot' at community locations/ sites and guest speakers can be interviewed. Once captured on film or tape -- these resources can be used over-and-over again. Authentic color, sights, and sounds (plus motion) add realism to audiovisual presentations. Is is though students are actually away from the classroom gaining new field-based experiences without leaving the safe confines of the school.

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HELPING STUDENTS PERCEIVE THEIR REAL LIFE WORLDS

According to the National Council for the Social Studies, in its Position Statement Ón Global Education (1981), the day-to-day lives of citizens (including school-age children and youth) are influenced by growing international, cross-cultural links. The phenomenon of globalization is evident by increased global consciousness which enhances awareness of our identities as members of the human species.

Because we do live in a global age, and because we do exist simultaneously within the context of several interrelated real life worlds; those that are nearby/close-to-home as well as those that are distant/far-removed from our daily routines, students must comprehend the enormity and complexity of the global community if they are to function effectively as 21st Century citizens.

OUR WORLDS

Those people, places, institutions, events, locations and sites, and other things that exist locally and which are experienced, directly, through the senses are lifespace phenomena perceived as being relevant in our singular, as well as our collective, lives.

Young children and youth realize the importance of community helpers in their lives; they understand how bicycles, television, stereos and CD players make their lives more enjoyable; and how baseball and football games, concerts, and holiday celebrations entertain them.

They must begin to realize that real life world phenomena changes, from place-to-place, as they move about the country and travel to previously unexplored regions of the global community. As they explore the global community, they will be exposed to different peoples, places, and things -- all of which have direct impact upon the quality and substance of their lives.

LIFESPACE AWARENESS

The study of diverse peoples, places, and situations results in the incorporation of previously non-perceived phenomena into the fabric of daily life. Awareness and understanding can result from direct exposure to/interaction with phenomena via field trips, excursions, and nature walks. It can also result from vicarious experiencing; e.g., watching audiovisual presentations which present authentic sights, sounds, and colors; listening to guest speakers in the classroom or at field-based sites; reading about far-removed peoples and places; and corresponding with pen pals.

Regardless of the methods used, the goal of exposing students to the several 'worlds' about them is to affect their awareness and understanding of natural and social (human-made) environments.

PROXIMITY

There are many real life world phenomena that cannot be directly experienced by children and youth because of hazardous conditions or other liability considerations as well as the miles that separate one from the other.

Real-to-life world experiences provide students the opportunity to interact with real life world phenomena that they might not otherwise gain exposure to.

Simulated interaction activities can include role playing scenarios, computer software, and games that require students to think critically and make real life - type decisions. Simulated experience activities provide a safe environment in which students can inquire and discover as a result of trial-and-error learning strategies. These vicarious experiences are integrated into the individual's lifespace awareness; a process that continues throughout one's lifetime.

Simulated (real-to-life) experiences bridge the perceptual 'gap' that exists, in the minds of students, between close-to-home phenomena that is experienced, directly, by the individual and real life world phenomena that is far-removed from direct experiencing.

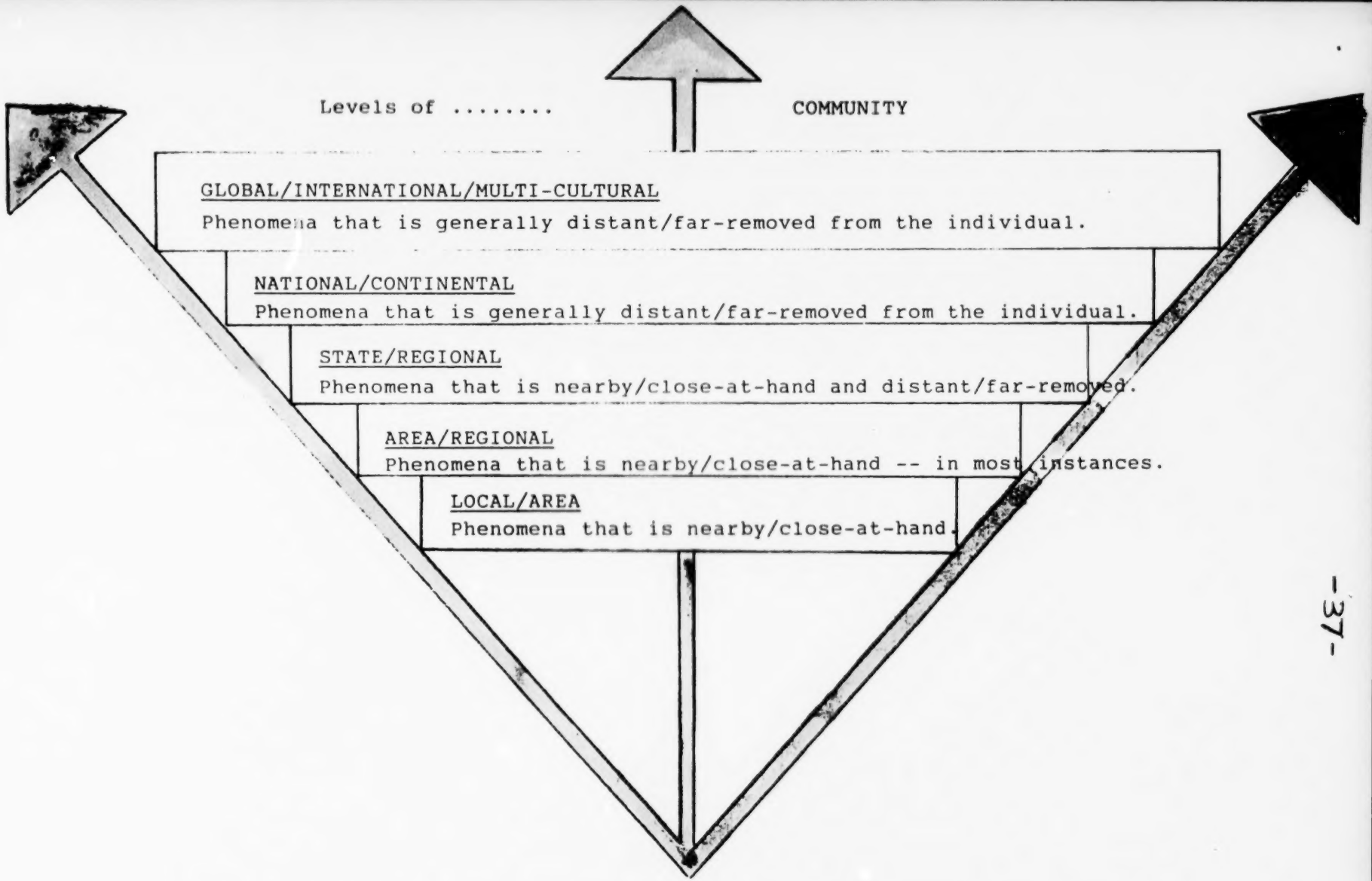
Both direct and vicarious experiencing activities; whether conducted in the classroom or at field-based sites, can encourage students to be proactive -- to inquire, to research, to ponder alternatives, to make critical decisions, and to act in ways so as to resolve personal/social conflicts, to clarify issues, to solve problems, and/or to better understand situations.

AWARENESS ENHANCEMENT

Students can be involved in a variety of instructional designs which enhance their perceptions and understandings about global community phenomena.

In addition to directed instruction situations in which teachers lecture or present concepts and information according to some pattern or sequence, students can be given opportunities to select those activities which interest them from a menu of alternatives.

Once exposed to new concepts, knowledge, and skills, students can be provided opportunities to apply them in real life world settings, e.g., field trips, nature walks, and excursions into natural and social environments, as well as in real-to-life (simulation) situations such as role playing activities and decision making-oriented computer software programs. Real-to-life world experiences must be designed to replicate real life world phenomena and situations that students would not otherwise be able to interact with as part of the instructional process.



As an individual matures and accumulates varied experiences (real and vicarious) into a field of reference, one's sense of COMMUNITY expands to include phenomena that is nearby/close-at-hand and distant/far-removed and found within the context of natural/social environments.